

Five Recommended Tips for Naturally Preventing the Flu



It's that time of year, ladies and gents, when the flu arrives, and with it, the choice of whether or not to get the flu vaccine. One thing we all agree upon, flu vaccine or not, is that none of us wants to get the flu. While for most, the flu is not serious or fatal, it is a miserable 5 days of high fever, deep achiness, and other cold symptoms. The main reason folks choose to avoid the vaccine is because it's effective only about 50% of the time, if that, and it contains a mercury-containing preservative called *thimerosal* that is a known neurotoxin, along with a host of other preservatives and additives to make it last longer and work stronger.

It is associated with side effects ranging from flu-like symptoms to more rarely, allergic reactions and even severe neurologic problems. If you have diabetes, heart disease, asthma, obesity, or an immune-compromised condition, the flu vaccine can be an important safety measure.

Here are 5 important things you can start doing now to avoid winter illnesses, including the flu:

1. Hand Hygiene – and Hugs!

Silly as it sounds, simple hand washing with soap and water goes a long way to prevent disease. Antimicrobial soaps, on the other hand, lead to more resistant infections and do not help prevent disease. Plain alcohol hand soaps are ok. And check this out, giving a hug instead of a handshake has been shown to prevent the spread of common viral infections!

2. Make your food your best medicine.

Focus on eating foods such as seasonal veggies, especially steamed leafy greens like kale and collards. Other good bets include broccoli, winter squashes, carrots, and sweet potatoes, garlic, onions, and fresh ginger. High quality sources of protein include beans, nuts, seeds, and good quality lean, organic meats if you are not a vegetarian. Fresh and frozen berries provide powerful antioxidant activity that reduces inflammation and keeps your immune system happy! Sugar dampens the immune system and should be avoided as much as possible. Ditto on fruit juices, soda, and regular alcohol intake.

3. Take your vitamins.

Vitamin D3 and Zinc are perhaps the most important vitamin supplements for boosting your immune system. And did you know that much of your immunity happens in your gut? It's true: probiotics keep your GI system immunity in top shape. If you typically get sick in the winter, consider a high-quality daily use multivitamin.

4. Stay well hydrated.

Keeping well-hydrated is super important because parched mucous membranes are more susceptible to inflammation and irritation, and then they don't do their job of acting as a primary barrier against infection.

5. Get enough rest and practice stress reduction.

Your nervous system and immune system are interlaced. Inner calm and a recharged nervous system keep your immune system in tip-top shape. Optimally, sleep 7-8 hours each night and turn off your electronics at least an hour before bed to let your system get quiet for a night of restorative sleep. Use a quick de-stressing technique during the day to regain that inner sense of calm when things get tough.